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## INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION IN THE DAYS OF THE INFORMATION REVOLUTION

### INTERPERSONALNA KOMUNIKACIJA U VREMENU INFORMACIJSKE REVOLUCIJE

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#### *Abstract*

Modern society is often described as being information-based, mass, web-structured and globalised. Changes in human environment change man's functioning and the character of social life. Human interactions with the environment ceased to involve just the interrelationship of external objects. Numerous researches from all branches of science point to the presence of new elements (telepathic media) and new structure of the environment (global economy, characteristic framework of social experience) which arrive at new "social quality". Human intercommunications have undergone revolutionary change. General access to the Internet, e-mail and mobile phones constitute new techniques of communications. These modern communications solutions, combined with fast pace of life and the size of communications can on one hand stimulate human development, while on the other hand they undermine the development of personal knowledge, experience and life style. In the age of technopolisation, it seems crucial to conduct a debate on behaviour regulating mechanisms such as knowledge and wisdom, as the process of hunting just for information results in blocking the opportunities for development, reflection and reactivity. This paper presents and discusses the above issues.

#### *Sažetak*

Za moderno se društvo često kaže da je bazirano na informacijama, masovno, mrežno strukturirano i globalno. Promjene u ljudskom okruženju mijenjaju način ljudskog funkcioniranja i karakter društvenog života. Ljudska interakcija prestala je uljučivati samo veze sa eksternim objektima. Brojna istraživanja svih grana znanosti upućuju na prisutnost novih elemenata (telepatičkih medija) i novih struktura okoline (globalna ekonomija, karakterističan okvir društvenog iskustva) koji dolaze kao nova „društvena kvaliteta“. Ljudska komunikacija doživljava revolucionarne promjene. Sveopći pristup internetu, e-mail i mobilna telefonija dovode do novih tehnika komuniciranja. Ova moderna komunikacijska rješenja. Ova moderna komunikacijska rješenja, u kombinaciji sa brzim ritmom života u jednu ruku mogu poticati ljudski razvoj, a opet mogu potkopati razvoj osobnog znanja, iskustva i životnog stila. U vrijeme tehnologizacije, važno je provesti debatu o ponašanju regulatornih mehanizama kao što su znanje i mudrost, jer sami lov za informacijama rezultira blokiranjem mogućnosti za razvoj, refleksiju i reaktivnost. Ovaj rad raspravlja o navedenim temama.

#### **Introduction**

In the days of developing globalization of the contemporary world the crucial role is played by the mass media. Internet, radio, TV, press are capable of passing information to all the people located in various remote parts of the worlds. They are awe-inspiring and generally regarded as technology miracles, but more and more frequently they provoke reflection over their social and humanistic dimension. A number of questions arise in the course of scientific disputes over the consequences of cultural contents or attitudes passed through these channels as well as behaviour styles of the contemporary and future generations.

#### **“To communicate”, “communication” – definitions of the terms**

The Latin term *communicare* means to be in relation, to associate, make common, allow to partake in something, include, join in, to communicate with somebody, to talk /1/, /2/. In this context the term gives the definition of an activity defined by the verb. It allows human being to exist in a social form. Technological development popularized a means of communication which, in result, ceased to fulfill only the function of individuals communicating with each other, but it also became a means of social communication.

*Communication* in the noun form (information, communicating with one another) can be

intentional, symbolic and social in its character. "(...) The role of the following elements are accented: features of both sender and receiver, feedback, context, code and channel. Due to the above aspects the term "communication" appears usually in a particular context. We speak of linguistic and non-linguistic communication (verbal and non-verbal), direct (face-to-face) communication, interpersonal communication, social communication, mass communication (...)" /3/. The exchange of information relates to human-human relation but also to human-computer relation as well as computer-computer one. Because next to direct interpersonal communication there is also a place for indirect interpersonal communication. In such cases, a particular technical means is applied for communication.

The knowledge of the models of communication appears to be useful when it concerns the definition of communicating with one another. In his models of communication Goban-Klas lists the transmission model as a message defined by the sender, the ritual model characteristic of mass communication and reception model emphasising that in the process of communication different receivers do not get the same message in the same way it was send.

"(...) Thus, it can be stated we deal with communication in situation when a person sends a message, meaning information about the outside world, about other people or himself/herself with a conscious intention of provoking somebody else's reaction." /4/. Passing information is possible thanks to the system of signs and symbols in a given community or given culture, which can be guessed by both partners of the communication relation.

Communication has a crucial meaning not only for cognitive development but first and foremost for social development and forming the interpersonal relations and affecting other individuals.

### **Specificity of change in the life environment of contemporary society**

Social change is an inescapable attribute of social life. To a certain extend it comprises a consequence of biological processes e.g. in case of inevitable generation changes. However, a considerable part of a social change has social, economic and cultural bases. More and more significant or even revolutionary role in the creation of a contemporary social change is played by the scientific-technical development. Consequently, the contemporary society is permeated with intense processes of change.

A contemporary global human being is shaped by popular culture to much greater extend than by

the traditional one. "(...) Global culture mass media make use of the representations of particular cultures and nations, add glamorous spices (a little bit of pop, a little bit of marketing and sensation and "poetics of consumption") and transform them into their own representation. Later on, the representations are being "blended" and transformed in the course of further processes of faking. What is created as a result is an image of "global consciousness" /5/. Popular culture, as the author put it, "(...) acts across the boundaries and continents and disperses national, country, ethnic and language differences (...)."

Nowadays, the ubiquity of media affects many spheres of private and social life. The social life is open in its character today, the number and diversity of interpersonal contacts continuously increases. These changes to a great extend are caused by popularization and popularity of Internet and its various applications. Thanks to the Internet, and especially, electronic mail, the boundaries of time and space are broken. Communicating embraces more and more participants. These modern communication solutions as well as fast pace of life and the number of outside stimula reaching a human being may be favourable but may also create a kind of hazard for his/her personal knowledge and experience.

### **The significance of global media in the Information Society**

Undeniable value of global media is manifested in providing the society with direct access to information. It is worthwhile at this point to mention the words of the greatest Authority of the turn of the centuries, John Paul II, who in his message for the 36th World Communications Day wrote that Internet as much as other communication tools serve the people only when one makes use of them in a competent way, with complete awareness of their advantages and disadvantages; Internet is a tool which only mediates in the communication and which should not replace direct contact between people and similarly, cyberspace cannot replace the real world.

Among many other, modern information technologies have an advantage of comprising valuable and attractive didactic means in an educational process.

As stated by Goban-Klass /6/ global media constitute the forum where matters recognized as public might be presented and disputed over; they are one of the instruments of social power, mobilization and provoking the innovativeness; they stimulate the development of human civilization;

they comprise the source of shaping the individual imagination; they create a new type of individual activity; they are a source of public system of meanings which is the very basis for measure and judgement criteria of generally accepted standards; they comprise a key to gaining fame and social position; they represent cultural and social values. What is more, many other scientists point positive impact of media in upbringing. There are, however, some concerns.

### Dangers of "global consciousness"

The cognitive-intellectual aspect in contacts seems overestimated whereas both emotional-motivational and practical-operational aspects are neglected. In practice, this causes serious consequences manifested among others in the ineptitude in solving problems by people, lack of the ability to counteract difficulties, lack of the ability to cope with stress or prevent pathologies. Favouring media transfers more and more often contributes to "(...) adopting distant, different and even strange experiences. Gradually incorporated in the sphere of thoughts, feelings and behaviors, they remain separated from personal experiences gathered gradually in the natural environment of life. Thus, modernity induces a new type of experiences the content of which does not constitute enough support in solving crucial problems in life. We can as a result deal with the phenomenon of social alienation, sense of alienation, lack of roots (...) /7/. In the days of the technopolization of life the style of living of young people undergoes changes. Cognitive activity of an individual is focused on obtaining many quick pieces of information. The primacy of immediateness has an enormous impact on identity. In case of an individual's reduced reflectivity, inability of putting in order the knowledge about the world and the lack of understanding of it we cannot talk about forming an identity. That is why individual's own activity grows in importance.

In the light of psychological theory of education activity means spontaneous action of an individual resulting in the development of his/her personality. Its essence lies in an educator not imposing on his/her pupils any objectives, contents and means of education. Everything that is imposed, according to the theory, inhibits natural activity of the children and the youth, and consequently their individual

development. The contemporary media world with its information technology creates even more serious dangers to young people. A number of research that have been released point diversity of the disadvantageous impacts of modern media on human personality, his/her reception of the world, attitudes and type of behavior.

In terms of sociological concept of education, activity means an active partaking of pupils in life and work of adults. In the light of this theory, evoking activity consists in activating social instinct and non-isolating it from life in society /8/. In the meantime, in scientific and popular science literature we can more and more often find the depiction of the phenomenon of loneliness caused by the lack of psychological bonds with another human and the consequences for individual and social life it causes.

In relation to school modern media became a parallel system of education. Thus, it seems that one of the most crucial objectives of future education is to prepare young people to create media messages which have humanistic values and are in respect to other views or cultures and simultaneous sense of tolerance and responsibility. The image which will be present in the awareness of people will be the one which is not related only to simple passing information between sender and receiver but will also be regarded as a dialogue of a community undertaken on international and intercultural level.

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